

BRIGHT FUTURES HANDOUT ► PARENT

11 THROUGH 14 YEAR VISITS

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.



✓ HOW YOUR FAMILY IS DOING

- Encourage your child to be part of family decisions. Give your child the chance to make more of her own decisions as she grows older.
- Encourage your child to think through problems with your support.
- Help your child find activities she is really interested in, besides schoolwork.
- Help your child find and try activities that help others.
- Help your child deal with conflict.
- Help your child figure out nonviolent ways to handle anger or fear.
- If you are worried about your living or food situation, talk with us. Community agencies and programs such as SNAP can also provide information and assistance.

✓ YOUR CHILD'S FEELINGS

- Find ways to spend time with your child.
- If you are concerned that your child is sad, depressed, nervous, irritable, hopeless, or angry, let us know.
- Talk with your child about how his body is changing during puberty.
- If you have questions about your child's sexual development, you can always talk with us.

✓ YOUR GROWING AND CHANGING CHILD

- Help your child get to the dentist twice a year.
- Give your child a fluoride supplement if the dentist recommends it.
- Encourage your child to brush her teeth twice a day and floss once a day.
- Praise your child when she does something well, not just when she looks good.
- Support a healthy body weight and help your child be a healthy eater.
 - Provide healthy foods.
 - Eat together as a family.
 - Be a role model.
- Help your child get enough calcium with low-fat or fat-free milk, low-fat yogurt, and cheese.
- Encourage your child to get at least 1 hour of physical activity every day. Make sure she uses helmets and other safety gear.
- Consider making a family media use plan. Make rules for media use and balance your child's time for physical activities and other activities.
- Check in with your child's teacher about grades. Attend back-to-school events, parent-teacher conferences, and other school activities if possible.
- Talk with your child as she takes over responsibility for schoolwork.
- Help your child with organizing time, if she needs it.
- Encourage daily reading.

✓ HEALTHY BEHAVIOR CHOICES

- Help your child find fun, safe things to do.
- Make sure your child knows how you feel about alcohol and drug use.
- Know your child's friends and their parents. Be aware of where your child is and what he is doing at all times.
- Lock your liquor in a cabinet.
- Store prescription medications in a locked cabinet.
- Talk with your child about relationships, sex, and values.
- If you are uncomfortable talking about puberty or sexual pressures with your child, please ask us or others you trust for reliable information that can help.
- Use clear and consistent rules and discipline with your child.
- Be a role model.

Helpful Resource: Family Media Use Plan: www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan

11 THROUGH 14 YEAR VISITS—PARENT

✓ SAFETY

- 1. Make sure everyone always wears a lap and shoulder seat belt in the car.
- 2. Provide a properly fitting helmet and safety gear for biking, skating, in-line skating, skiing, snowmobiling, and horseback riding.
- 3. Use a hat, sun protection clothing, and sunscreen with SPF of 15 or higher on her exposed skin. Limit time outside when the sun is strongest (11:00 am–3:00 pm).
- 4. Don't allow your child to ride ATVs.
- 5. Make sure your child knows how to get help if she feels unsafe.
- 6. If it is necessary to keep a gun in your home, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.

Consistent with *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, 4th Edition

For more information, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org>.

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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for today's teens: a message from your pediatrician



Now that you are getting older, you have different health needs than you did when you were younger. However, your pediatrician is still there to help you stay healthy.

Just ask

Beginning when you are about 11 or 12 years old, your pediatrician might suggest that you spend some time alone with him or her during your health care visits. Why? While it's always important to talk with parents about some personal things in your life, it can be really hard. But you can always ask your pediatrician about personal stuff. They've heard it all! Plus, your pediatrician cares about your health and wants to help you in any way.

Talking with your pediatrician is a great way to get the answers about how your body works, how to take care of yourself, how to handle your emotions, how to stay healthy, and how to talk about these things with your parents.

Remember, your pediatrician will keep most of what you talk about private! This is called *confidentiality*. There may be exceptions, like if your life or someone else's life is in danger. And in some states the law may require pediatricians to share certain information. At your next visit feel free to ask your pediatrician about what's confidential.

Take charge!

Some kids your age only see their pediatrician when they are sick or hurt. But staying healthy means more than just seeing a doctor when something is wrong. You're getting old enough to start taking charge of your own health. This means preventing problems before they start.

So, see your pediatrician once a year, just to make sure everything is OK.

Of course, you should also see your pediatrician when you are sick or hurt.

Important stuff

Hopefully you feel comfortable enough with your pediatrician to ask anything, even stuff that's a little embarrassing. But in case you're wondering what kinds of things pediatricians can help you with, check out the following list:

• Sports or school physicals

If you play sports, you probably need to get a physical before you can play. Some kids need a physical before the start of a new school year. This is a great time to talk with your pediatrician about your health and how to avoid injuries and stay healthy and fit.

• Treatment of illnesses or injuries

Have you been sick lately? Did you get hurt recently? These are important things to tell your pediatrician about, even if you think they're no big deal. Let your pediatrician know about any pain you have or anything that feels different.

• Growth and development

Your body is changing fast and you might want to talk about what's going on. Don't know where to start? You may want to ask

—Will I be as tall as my parents?

—What can I do about these pimples?

—Am I fat?

—Why are my breasts uneven? (Girls—The answer is often normal variation.)

—Why are my pajamas wet in the morning? (Guys—The answer is almost always nocturnal emission or "wet dream.")

• Personal and/or family problems

Having a hard time dealing with your friends or family? Feel like your parents just don't understand you? Maybe you're being teased at school, feeling pressure from some friends, or being bullied. All of these things can be pretty hard to deal with. If you don't know where to turn, remember that your pediatrician is there to help. Just ask.

• School problems

You may worry about your grades and your future. Maybe you're finding it hard to keep up with school, a job, sports, or other activities. Your pediatrician may be able to help you through this busy time of your life.

• Alcohol and drug use

You probably know kids who are using cigarettes, alcohol, or other drugs. Maybe you've been tempted to try these things too. But don't forget—what's right for them might not always be right for you.

Becoming an adult means more than just getting taller. It also means you have to make decisions about your life, not letting someone else make them for you. Your pediatrician can explain how smoking, drinking, or taking other drugs can affect you and why it's smart to stay away from them.

• Sex

During visits with your pediatrician, you'll have a chance to ask questions about dating, sex, and other personal stuff. It's important to make the right choices about sex now. The wrong choice could affect the rest of your life. The good news is, whatever you and your pediatrician talk about is private so go ahead and ask about sex, how to protect yourself against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy, or whatever else you want to know about.

- **Conflicts with parents**

Having any problems at home? Does it sometimes seem like no one understands you or respects your ideas? You're not alone. If you have a problem that your parents may not understand, talk with your pediatrician. Sometimes an outside person can give a better view of these difficult situations. Your pediatrician might also have some ideas on how to get through to your parents.

- **Referrals to other doctors for special health needs**

You may have a medical problem that will require you to see a different doctor or specialist. In that case, your pediatrician can refer you to another doctor who can help you. But even though you may need to see a specialist, your pediatrician still cares about your health and wants to see you for regular checkups or illnesses.

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From your doctor

What you can do to stay healthy

To get a head start on taking charge of your own health, use the following list to keep yourself healthy:

- Eat right and get plenty of sleep (most teens need 9–10 hours a night).
- Know how to handle minor injuries like cuts and bruises, as well as minor illnesses like colds.
- Know how to get medical help for things like vomiting, headache, high fever, earache, sore throat, diarrhea, or stomach pain.
- Ask for help if you have sleep problems, sadness, family stress, school problems, problems with alcohol or other drugs, or trouble getting along with friends, family, or teachers.
- Don't use alcohol, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco (chew), and other drugs.
- Delay having sex or use protection if you choose to have sex.
- Exercise regularly.
- Always wear your seat belt when you are in a car or truck.

As you become an adult, you'll face many challenges. With help from your pediatrician, you'll learn how to make the right decisions that will help you grow up healthy.

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

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What do I need to know about alcohol, other drugs and teen health?

As parents, you want what is best for your child. You want them to be healthy, safe and successful in achieving their goals. Unfortunately, underage drinking and drug use can lead to serious problems that interfere with your hopes and dreams for them.

Early use of alcohol and other drugs puts teens at greater risk for addiction and other health problems, failing in school, and career choices limited by arrests and lack of education. Alcohol, marijuana and nicotine are the drugs most commonly used by youth. Alcohol and marijuana use:

- **Can begin as early as elementary school.** The Washington Healthy Youth Survey shows that by the time teens are in the 10th grade, one in five has started using alcohol or marijuana regularly.
- **Can harm the developing teen brain.** Alcohol and marijuana can harm areas of the brain that control motor coordination, impulse control, memory, learning and judgment. Because the teen brain is still developing, it is more vulnerable than an adult's brain to the effects of alcohol and other drugs. This can lead to school failure and dropout.

- **Is associated with the top three causes of teen deaths:** accidents (including traffic fatalities and drowning), homicide, and suicide. Excessive drinking is responsible for more than 4,300 deaths among underage youth each year. In 2010, there were 189,000 emergency room visits nationwide by those under age 21 for injuries related to alcohol. (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*).

- **Increases the risk of STDs and pregnancy.** Teens who drink and use other drugs are more likely to engage in sex and to have sex with four or more partners than teens who don't use (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy). Such behavior can result in AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy.

- **Can lead to addiction.** The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that youth who start drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse as adults, than those who begin drinking at age 21 or later. During 2015, 78 percent of Washington youth (12-17) who received publicly-funded addiction treatment listed marijuana as their primary drug (*Washington Department of Social and Health Services*).

- **Isn't safer at home under your supervision.** Teens can overdose on alcohol or marijuana just as easily at home. You and your teen can be held legally liable for property damage, assault, injuries, and deaths resulting from underage use on your property. If you allow your teen to use alcohol or marijuana at home, they are more likely to think it's okay when they are with their friends.

What can I do to keep my children healthy and safe?

You have the greatest influence in your child's decisions about alcohol and other drugs – even during the teen years. The top reason most kids give for not using drugs? They don't want to disappoint their parents. Here are some proven ways to help your child avoid alcohol and other drugs:

- **Talk with your children** early and often about the risks of using alcohol, marijuana and other drugs. Teach them the risks to their health and future. Kids who learn a lot about the dangers of drugs from their parents are 50 percent less likely to use alcohol and drugs than those who don't (*Partnership Attitude Tracking Survey*). Get tips for starting the conversation at www.StartTalkingNow.org.

- **Bond with your child.** Children who feel close to their parents are less likely to use alcohol or marijuana. Stay actively involved in their lives, eat dinner together and do fun family activities. Recognize them often for making positive and healthy choices.



Monitoring: Who, what, when, where

How can I spot alcohol or drug use in my teens?

If you suspect your teen is using alcohol, marijuana or other drugs, the Partnership for Drug Free Kids suggests the following five ways to find out if you might be right. Even if you don't find evidence, trust your instincts.


- **Use your nose.** Have a face-to-face conversation when your teen comes home from a night out with friends. If your child has been using alcohol, tobacco or marijuana, the smell will be on their breath, clothing and hair.
- **Take a closer look.** When your teen gets back from going out with friends, are their pupils constricted or dilated? Do they have trouble focusing on you? Does their face look red or flushed?
- **Watch for mood changes.** How is your teen acting after a night out with friends? Are they loud and obnoxious, or laughing hysterically at nothing? Are they stumbling into furniture and walls, tripping over their own feet and knocking things over? Are they sulen, withdrawn, and unusually tired? Queasy? These are all signs your teen could have been using alcohol, marijuana, or something else.

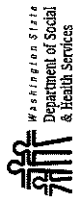
Talk with your teen about any concerns and seek help if necessary by calling the:

Washington
Recovery Help Line
24-Hour Help for Substance Abuse, Problem Gambling & Mental Health
1.866.789.1511
(Toll Free)

For more resources, visit:



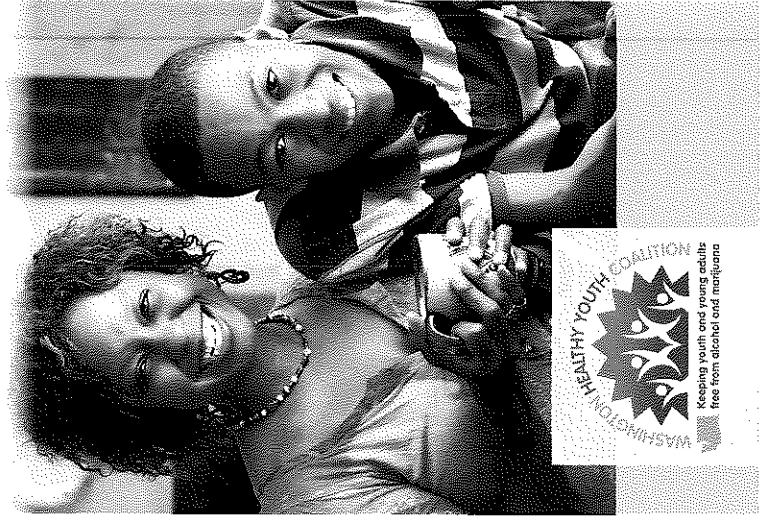
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Transforming lives
DSHS 22-1506 (6/16)

A parent's guide to raising drug-free kids

- **Monitor driving and the car.** Is your teen driving more reckless after being with friends? Is there a new dent in the car they claim to know nothing about? Does the inside of the car smell like marijuana or alcohol? Are there any bottles, pipes, bong, or other drug paraphernalia rolling around on the floor or in the glove box? If you find anything, challenge your teen on it immediately. Tell them what you've discovered and why you're concerned.
- **Keep an eye out for deceit or secretiveness.** Are your teen's weekend plans starting to sound a little fishy? Are they being vague about where they're going? Can they describe the movie they just saw? Does your teen tell you that parents will be at the party they are going to but can't give you a phone number and comes home acting intoxicated? Does your teen get in way past curfew with a long list of excuses? Your intuition is your best parenting tool. It's time to confront your child and talk about what you are seeing. It's important to intervene early and get help if needed.





ADVICE

Teaching Teens to Respect Diversity

Respecting diversity involves understanding and valuing the perspectives, behaviors and needs of people from all backgrounds.

Respecting diversity involves understanding and valuing the perspectives, behaviors and needs of people from all backgrounds. The world is a great tapestry of different cultures, abilities, beliefs, genders and preferences, and the ability to respect others sets the tone for the way a person approaches their interactions and relationships. As society becomes more diverse, your adolescent will most likely be exposed to people from various backgrounds, and it is good to teach her about the value of respecting differences.

Expose your middle-schooler to different cultures and backgrounds. You are a great influence in your child's life, and by having diverse friendships and being respectful of people's views and backgrounds, you will be providing her with a valuable lesson in tolerance. You can also help build your child's ability to respect differences by encouraging her to participate in activities that promote diversity and nurture tolerance. Find local cultural events, like parades or celebrations, and bring the whole family to enjoy the festivities. These types of events can be a fun way to introduce your adolescent to new cultures and help her gain awareness of the diverse history of our country. You may also want to sign her up for summer camp, an art workshop or a peer program that includes people from all backgrounds and abilities. For example, there are many programs out there that allow children to mentor or become "buddies" with children with special needs. You can contact your local children's hospital to learn more about which programs exist in your community as well.

Teach your adolescent about the need to be open-minded. People all have different experiences, backgrounds, customs, opinions, points of view, genders and preferences, and it's good to talk to your child regularly about the importance of being accepting of others. Neurologist Judy Willis says that helping your adolescent become open-minded about differences can build her mental flexibility, problem-solving abilities and sense of tolerance. Willis suggests that you talk to your middle-schooler about the beliefs of those involved in social problems and ask her to consider what historical figures would think about these current issues.

Talk about bullying. Bullying is a growing concern for children at this age, and by teaching your child about respecting and honoring differences, you are also helping to prepare her to respond to bullying in an assertive way. Bullying is often linked to prejudice, as the targets of bullies are often people who are considered “different” by their peers. Name-calling, physical harassment, hurtful comments online and being left out of cliques are some of the most common ways middle-school students are exposed to bullying. Education consultant Jennifer Miller recommends that you prepare your adolescent with responses to bullying behavior. Often young people are caught off-guard and don’t know how to respond to bullying. Miller suggests that you work together on what your child can say to stop the harassment and allow her to remain respectful of herself and others. Sometimes, it’s as simple as saying, “Stop, you know you’re wrong,” with some assertion. Or she can say, “You know you are out of line,” if the bully is harassing another person, and then she can leave the area and tell an adult who can help the victim. By reminding your adolescent that others’ opinions and feelings are valid even when they are different from her own, you are helping to raise an open-minded child who has the courage and skills needed to stand up against bullying.

WATCH FOR SIGNS – Stop Youth Suicide

"If a young person you know seems depressed or gloomy and has been spending a lot of time questioning why life is worth the bother, it's time to pay attention." Anonymous Parent (son lost to suicide)



THE FACTS:

- ❖ Between 2003 and 2007, 539 Washington State youths completed suicide – an average of two youth suicides each week.
- ❖ Youth suicides outnumber youth homicides in Washington State.
- ❖ Between 2003 and 2007, 4,269 Washington State youths were admitted to the hospital for non-fatal suicidal behavior – an average of 16 admissions per week.
- ❖ Boys and young men are significantly more likely to complete suicide – this is partly a result of using more lethal means – while girls and young women are more likely to make suicide attempts that result in hospitalization.
- ❖ 30% of Washington State 10th graders reported feeling so sad or hopeless in the past year that they stopped doing their usual activities.
- ❖ 26% of all 10th graders indicated that it was unlikely that they would seek adult help if they were feeling depressed or suicidal. More than 30% indicated that they did not have adults they could turn to if they were feeling sad or depressed.

Youth suicide is a significant problem in our state. There are warning signs you can watch for – and specific actions you can take – to help prevent young people from taking their own lives.

Learn how to recognize these warning signs, the “clues” that a young person might be considering suicide, and how to let them know you care.

Youth of all races, creeds, incomes, and educational levels attempt or complete suicide. There is no typical suicide victim. About 80% of the time people who kill themselves have given definite signals or talked about suicide. The key to prevention is knowing what the warning signs are, and what to do to help.

WARNING SIGNS:

Most suicidal young people don't really want to die – they just want their pain to end. There are several signs to watch for that may indicate someone is thinking about suicide. The more signs, the greater the risk.

- A previous suicide attempt.
- Current talk of suicide, or making a plan.
- Strong wish to die, preoccupation with death, giving away prized possessions.
- Signs of serious depression, such as moodiness, hopelessness, withdrawal.
- Increased alcohol and/or other drug use.
- Recent suicide attempted by a friend or family member.

There are other key “risk factors” to keep in mind that increase the likelihood of suicide attempts by young people. Again, the more signs observed, the greater the risk.

- Readily accessible firearms.
- Impulsiveness and taking unnecessary risks.
- Lack of connection to family and friends (no one to talk to).

PREVENTION STEPS:

If you’re worried about a young person and suicide has crossed your mind as a concern, trust your judgment. Do something now! Here’s what you might say to a young person who is thinking about suicide:

1) SHOW YOU CARE: Let the person know you really care. Talk about your feelings and ask about his or hers. Listen carefully to what they have to say.

“I’m concerned about you ... about how you feel.”

“Tell me about your pain.”

“You mean a lot to me and I want to help.”

“I care about you, about how you’re holding up.”

“I don’t want you to kill yourself.”

“I’m on your side ... we’ll get through this.”

2) ASK THE QUESTION: Don’t hesitate to raise the subject. Talking with young people about suicide won’t put the idea in their heads. Chances are, if you’ve observed any of the warning signs, they are already thinking about it. Be direct in a caring, non-confrontational way. Get the conversation started.

“Are you thinking about suicide?”

“Are you thinking about harming yourself, ending your life?”

“What thoughts or plans do you have?”

“How long have you been thinking about suicide?”

“Have you thought about how you would do it?”

“Do you have _____?” (insert the lethal means they have mentioned)

“Do you really want to die? Or do you want the pain to go away?”

3) CALL FOR HELP: The first steps toward instilling a sense of hope are: showing your concern, raising the issue, and listening to and understanding the young person’s feelings. Keep moving forward, together. Call for help.

“Together I know we can figure something out to make you feel better.”

“I know where we can get some help.”

“Let’s talk to someone who can help... let’s call the crisis line, now.”

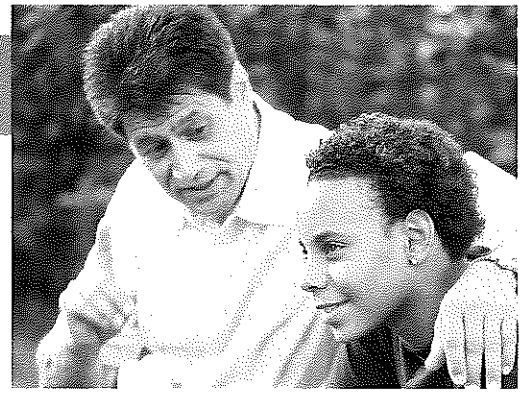
“I can go with you to where we can get help.”

“You’re not alone. Let me help you.”

If the young person has expressed an immediate plan, or has access to a gun or other potentially deadly means, do not leave him or her alone: **GET HELP IMMEDIATELY!**

Please call your local **CRISIS LINE** at 360-425-6064 or 1-800-273-TALK
TEEN TALK: call 360-397-2428 or text 360-984-0936

tips for parents of adolescents



Adolescence is the time between childhood and adulthood when your daughter or son will go through many physical and emotional changes. It begins with puberty which, for girls, usually starts between 8 and 13 years of age, and for boys, between 10 to 14 years of age.

Though these years can be difficult, it can also be a rewarding time watching your teen make the transition into an independent, caring, and responsible adult.

The American Academy of Pediatrics offers the following tips to help you and your teen navigate adolescence. *Teen* will be the term used in this publication when referring to adolescent, teenager, preteen, and tween.

- 1. Spend family time with your teen.** Although many teens may seem more interested in friends, this does not mean they are not interested in family.
- 2. Spend time alone with your teen.** Even if your teen does not want time alone with you, remind him or her often that you are always available to listen or talk. One way to make yourself available is to offer rides; a great opportunity to talk (if the radio isn't too loud).
- 3. When your teen talks**
 - Pay attention.
 - Watch, as well as listen.
 - Try not to interrupt.
 - Ask for further details if you don't understand.
 - If you don't have time to listen, set a time that will be good for both of you.
- 4. Respect your teen.** It's OK to disagree with your teen, but disagree respectfully, not insultingly. Don't dismiss his or her feelings or opinions as silly or senseless. You may not always be able to help when your teen is upset about something, but it is important to say, "I want to understand," or "Help me understand."
- 5. When rules are needed, set and enforce them.** Don't be afraid to be unpopular for a day or two. Believe it or not, teens see setting limits as a form of caring.
- 6. Try not to get upset if your teen makes mistakes.** This will help your teen take responsibility for his or her actions. Remember to offer guidance when necessary. Direct the discussion toward solutions. For example, saying, "I get upset when I find clothes all over the floor," is much better than, "You're a slob."

Be willing to negotiate and compromise. This will teach problem solving in a healthy way. Remember to choose your battles. Let go of the little things that may not be worth a big fight.
- 7. Criticize a behavior, not an attitude.** For example, instead of saying, "You're late. That's so irresponsible. And I don't like your attitude," try saying, "I worry about your safety when you're late. I trust you, but when I don't hear from you and don't know where you are, I wonder whether something bad has happened to you. What can we do together to help

you get home on time and make sure I know where you are or when you're going to be late?"

- 8. Mix criticism with praise.** Your teen needs to know how you feel when he or she is not doing what you want him or her to do. Be sure to mix in positive feedback with this criticism. For example, "I'm proud that you are able to hold a job and get your homework done. I would like to see you use some of that energy to help do the dishes after meals."
- 9. Let your teen be a teen.** Give your teen some leeway with regard to clothes, hairstyle, etc. Many teens go through a rebellious period in which they want to express themselves in ways that are different from their parents. However, be aware of the messages and ratings of the music, movies, and video games to which your teen is exposed.
- 10. Be a parent first, not a friend.** Your teen's separation from you as a parent is a normal part of development. Don't take it personally.
- 11. Don't be afraid to share mistakes you've made as a parent or as a teen.**
- 12. Talk with your teen's pediatrician** if you need advice on how to talk with or get along with your teen.

Common questions

The following are answers to questions from parents of teens.

Dieting and body image

"My daughter is always trying new diets. How can I help her lose weight safely?"

Many teens resort to extreme diet or exercise programs because they want their bodies to look like the models, singers, actors, or athletes they see in the media.

Tips for a healthy diet

- Limit fast-food meals. Discuss the options available at fast-food restaurants and help your teen find a healthy, balanced diet. Fat should not come from junk food but from healthier foods such as low-fat cheese or low-fat yogurt.
- Keep the household supply of junk food such as candy, cookies, and potato chips to a minimum.
- Stock up on low-fat healthy items for snacking such as fruit, raw vegetables, whole-grain crackers, and low-fat yogurt. Encourage eating fruits and vegetables as snacks.
- Check with your teen's doctor about the proper amounts of calories, fat, protein, and carbohydrates for your teen.
- As a parent, model good eating habits. Make mealtime family time (5 times per week or more)—eating meals together helps with communication and reduces teen risk-taking.

Be aware of any diet or exercise program your daughter is following. Be watchful of how much weight she loses and make sure the diet program is healthy. Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa can be very dangerous. If you suspect your daughter has an eating disorder, talk with her doctor right away. Also, if you have a son, it's important to be aware of his diet or exercise habits too.

Many diets are unhealthy for teens because they do not have the nutritional value that bodies need during puberty. If your daughter wants to lose weight, urge her to increase physical activity and to take weight off slowly. Let her eat according to her own appetite, but make sure she gets enough fats, carbohydrates, protein, and calcium.

If your daughter decides to become a vegetarian, make certain she follows a healthy vegetarian diet. She may need to see her doctor or a nutritionist to ensure that she is getting enough fat, calories, protein, and calcium.

If your teen (like many teens) is unhappy with the way she looks, encourage healthy exercise. Physical activity will help stop hunger pangs, create a positive self-image, and take away the "blahs." If she wants to train with weights, she should check with her doctor, as well as a trainer, coach, or physical education teacher.

Help create a positive self-image by praising her wonderful qualities and focusing less on her appearance. Set a good example by making exercise and eating right a part of your daily routine also.

Dating and sex education

"With all the sex on TV, how can I teach my son to wait until he is ready?"

Teens (females and males) are naturally curious about sex. This is completely normal and healthy. However, teens may be pressured

Talking with your teen about sex

Before your teen becomes sexually active, make sure you discuss the following topics:

- **Medical and physical risks.** Risks include unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, hepatitis B, syphilis, herpes, HIV (the virus that causes AIDS), and HPV (human papillomavirus—the virus that can cause cancers of the mouth and throat, cervix, and genitals in teens and adults).
- **Emotional risks.** Teens who have sex before they are emotionally ready may regret the decision when they are older or feel guilty, frightened, or ashamed from the experience. Your teen should ask himself or herself, "Am I ready to have sex?" or "What will happen after I have sex?"
- **Promoting safer sex.** Anyone who is sexually active needs to be aware of how to prevent unintended pregnancies, as well as how to protect against STIs. Condoms should always be used *along with* a second method of contraception to prevent pregnancy and reduce the risk of STIs.
- **Setting limits.** Make sure your teen has thought about what his or her sexual limits are *before* dating begins.

Most importantly, let your teen know that he or she can talk with you and his or her doctor about dating and relationships. Offer your guidance throughout this important stage in your teen's life.

into having sex too soon by their peers or the media. Talk with your son to understand his feelings and views about sex. Start early and provide him with access to information that is accurate and appropriate. Delaying sexual involvement could be the most important decision he makes.

Drugs

"I am afraid some of my daughter's friends have offered her drugs. How can I help her make the right decision?"

Teens may try or use tobacco and alcohol or other drugs to fit in or as a way to deal with peer pressure. Try to help build self-confidence or self-esteem in your teen. Ask your daughter about any concerns and problems she is facing and help her learn how to deal with strong emotions and cope with stress in ways that are healthy. For instance, encourage her to participate in leisure and outside activities with teens who don't drink and use drugs.

Smoking and tobacco

"My daughter smokes behind my back. How do I convince her to quit?"

Smoking can turn into a lifelong addiction that can be extremely hard to break. Discuss with your teen some of the more undesirable effects of smoking, including bad breath, stained teeth, wrinkles, a long-term cough, and decreased athletic performance. Long-term use can also lead to serious health problems like emphysema and cancer.

Chew or snuff can also lead to nicotine addiction and causes the same health problems as smoking cigarettes. In addition, mouth wounds or sores can form and may not heal easily. Smokeless tobacco can also lead to cancer.

If you suspect your daughter is smoking or using smokeless tobacco and you need advice, talk with her doctor. Schedule a visit with her doctor when you and your daughter can discuss the risks associated with smoking and the best ways to quit before it becomes a lifelong habit.

If you smoke...quit

If you or someone else in the household smokes, now is a good time to quit. Watching a parent struggle through the process of quitting can be a powerful message for a teen who is thinking about starting. It also shows that you care about your health, as well as your teen's.

Alcohol

"I know my son drinks once in a while, but it's just beer. Why should I worry?"

Alcohol is the most socially accepted drug in our society, and also one of the most abused and destructive. Even small amounts of alcohol can impair judgment, provoke risky and violent behavior, and slow down reaction time. An intoxicated teen (or anyone else) behind the wheel of a car makes it a lethal weapon. Alcohol-related car crashes are the leading cause of death for young adults aged 15 to 24 years.

Though it's illegal for people younger than 21 years to drink, we all know that most teens are not strangers to alcohol. Many of them

are introduced to alcohol during childhood. If you choose to use alcohol in your home, be aware of the example you set for your teen. The following suggestions may help:

- Having a drink should never be shown as a way to cope with problems.
- Don't drink in unsafe conditions—for example, driving the car, mowing the lawn, and using the stove.
- Don't encourage your teen to drink or to join you in having a drink.
- Do not allow your children to drink alcohol before they reach the legal age and teach them never, ever to drink and drive.
- Never make jokes about getting drunk; make sure that your children understand that it is neither funny nor acceptable.
- Show your children that there are many ways to have fun without alcohol. Happy occasions and special events don't have to include drinking.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

From your doctor

American Academy
of Pediatrics



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Parent Resources for Children 13-14 years old

There are so many resources available online for parents. Who do you trust? Here are some links approved by your pediatrician, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

<p>Healthy Children.org has a wealth of information for parents, including a Symptom checker, ideas for challenging your child to grow in development, and answers to questions about care of your child. https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx</p>	
<p>When Your Child Needs Emergency Care – What to do? https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/When-Your-Child-Needs-Emergency-Medical-Services.aspx</p>	
<p>Is there a gun where your child plays? Have the conversation before your child visits a new house. https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Handguns-in-the-Home.aspx</p>	
<p>Drug abuse prevention starts with a conversation between a parent and a child. Here are some suggestions on how to talk with your children. Help them say NO to drugs. https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/substance-abuse/Pages/Drug-Abuse-Prevention-Starts-with-Parents.aspx</p>	
<p>How to set up Parental Controls on all your young teen’s devices. https://protectyoungeyes.com/</p>	
<p>Parents Guide to Media – best games, apps, books, for all ages. https://www.common sense media.org/</p>	

If you don't have a QR code reader on your phone, try these:

Apple iPhone: Go to the App Store and search for "QR Reader". It's free; no ads.

Android: Go to Google Play Store and search for "QR Code Reader". It's free; no ads.